



## State of Connecticut

### SENATE

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Public Hearing Testimony  
February 1, 2011  
Labor & Public Employees Committee  
Kevin Witkos, State Senator, Eighth District

Re: SB 96 - An Act Concerning Termination Without Cause For Certain Officers In  
Municipal Police Departments

Good morning Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski, Ranking Members Guglielmo and Rigby and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate 96 - An Act Concerning Termination Without Cause For Certain Officers In Municipal Police Departments.

Under current law, most municipal police officers are able to collectively bargain for benefits. As such, they are afforded certain protections with regard to suspension and dismissal. Connecticut law also provides employment protection for municipal police chiefs. Although they cannot be part of a collective bargaining contract, they cannot be dismissed unless there is a showing of "just cause."

Unfortunately, for the second-in-command, they have no such protection. Since the second-in command is considered a "department head," they are not allowed to be part of a collective bargaining unit. Moreover, since they are not the chief of police, they do not have "just cause" protection.

What this bill would do would be to say that if you were the second-in-command, you would have the same employment protection as the chief of police does. This bill would not prevent bad officers from being fired - it would merely state that there would need to be just cause before the dismissal occurred.

For many, rising through the ranks of a police department to reach chief often takes many years. Throughout that time, they are afforded the protections granted to them as a result of being part of a collective bargaining unit. It seems somewhat confusing that right as they are about to make that potential transition to chief, that they would lose that very protection that they have had for years.

In closing, I would like to thank the co-chairs for their willingness to raise Senate Bill 96 this session. I sincerely hope that the committee looks favorable on this bill so that it can make its way through the legislative process. Thank you.